

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

- 1    1 - 6.    (cancelled)
- 1    7.        (original): A connector for bundled optical fibers, comprising:
- 2            a first male connector component including:
- 3            a first ferrule holding a plurality of optical fibers, including a central optical fiber and
- 4    outer, symmetrically disposed optical fibers, said plurality of optical fibers being fixedly held
- 5    relative to each other within said first ferrule;
- 6            a first alignment sleeve having a central axis thereof, and wherein said central optical
- 7    fiber of said first ferrule is disposed along said central axis of said first alignment sleeve;
- 8            a first alignment member being formed on said first alignment sleeve;
- 9            wherein a central axis of said central optical fiber of said first ferrule and a central axis of
- 10   at least one said outer optical fibers of said first ferrule are disposed in a straight line alignment
- 11   with said first alignment member of said first alignment sleeve;
- 12            a second male connector component, including:
- 13            a second ferrule holding a plurality of optical fibers, including a central optical fiber an
- 14    outer, symmetrically disposed optical fibers, said plurality of optical fibers being fixedly held
- 15    relative to each other within said second ferrule;
- 16            a second alignment sleeve having a central axis thereof, and wherein said central optical
- 17    fiber of said second ferrule is disposed along said central axis of said second alignment sleeve;
- 18            a second alignment member being formed on said second alignment sleeve;

19 wherein a central axis of said central optical fiber of said second ferrule and a central axis  
20 of at least one said outer optical fibers of said second ferrule are disposed in a straight line  
21 alignment with said second alignment member of said second alignment sleeve; and  
22 a connector sleeve including a bore for the slidable engagement of said first and second  
23 male connector components therewithin, said sleeve including two opposed key slots, wherein an  
24 alignment key of said first male connector component and an alignment key of said second male  
25 connector component are slidably disposed within said two slots to align said optical fibers  
26 within said first and second male connector components together.

1 8. (original): A connector as described in claim 7 wherein said optical fibers within said  
2 first ferrule are color coded, and wherein said optical fibers within said second ferrule are color  
3 coded in a mirroring relationship to the color coded optical fibers of said first ferrule.

1 9. (original): A connector as described in claim 7 wherein said first alignment member  
2 comprises said alignment key of said first male connector component, and wherein said  
3 alignment key of said first male connector component projects radially from an outer surface of  
4 said first alignment sleeve.

1 10. (original): A connector as described in claim 7 wherein said second alignment member  
2 comprises said alignment key of said second male connector component, and wherein said  
3 alignment key of said second male connector component projects radially from an outer surface  
4 of said second alignment sleeve.

1 11. (original): A connector as described in claim 7 wherein said first ferrule is engaged  
2 within a first ferrule holding sleeve, and said first ferrule holding sleeve is engaged within said  
3 first alignment sleeve.

1 12. (original): A connector component described in claim 7 wherein said second ferrule is  
2 engaged within a second ferrule holding sleeve, and said second ferrule holding sleeve is  
3 engaged within said second alignment sleeve.

1 13. (original): A connector as described in claim 11 wherein said first ferrule is slidably  
2 engaged within said first ferrule holding sleeve such that rotational movement of said first ferrule  
3 relative to said first ferrule holding sleeve is prevented, while axial motion of said first ferrule  
4 within said first ferrule holding sleeve is permitted.

1 14. (original): A connector as described in claim 12 wherein said second ferrule is slidably  
2 engaged within said second ferrule holding sleeve such that rotational movement of said second  
3 ferrule relative to said second ferrule holding sleeve is prevented, while axial motion of said  
4 second ferrule within said second ferrule holding sleeve is permitted.

1 15. (original): A connector as described in claim 13 wherein said first ferrule holding sleeve  
2 is fixedly engaged with said first alignment sleeve.

1 16. (original): A connector as described in claim 14 wherein said second ferrule holding  
2 sleeve is fixedly engaged with said second alignment sleeve.